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La Casa de Don Pedro

annual report: 2002



our growing legacy



about the cover

2002 marks La Casa de Don Pedro's 30th Anniversary serving Newark's north end and the greater Newark community.

Our yearlong celebration of this milestone follows the theme "Our Growing Legacy", reflecting our accomplishments to date as well as our vision for the future.

The housing pictured on the cover comes from Mt. Prospect Avenue, less than a mile away from La Casa's main offices. The hands pictured in the inset belong to a child from our pre-kindergarten resting in the hands of one of our senior volunteers. If the housing is the physical manifestation of our community, the hands represent the passing of knowledge between the generations of people who make up our community.

Thirty years ago, La Casa's seeds were planted in Newark's north end. Those seeds have taken root and sprouted in this community; however, we consider La Casa still in the early stages of our development. Community revitalization is a process whose bounty is reaped over decades. Our progress is visible in the housing developments, improved employment rates for our participants and higher test scores for our pre-kindergartners, however there is more work to be done. Our commitment to revitalizing both the physical and human assets in our community motivates every aspect of La Casa's work and we are confident that the best is yet to come.

Carlos M. Arrom, Senior Vice President, Prudential Financial

Samuel A. Delgado, Human Resource Manager, Verizon

Digna Dubon, Business Owner

Marc C. Epps Jr., Senior Assistant to the Director of Finance, City of Newark

Charles M. Grossman, Esq., Pitman, Pitman, Mindas, Grossman & Lee Attorneys at Law

Zoraya Lee-Hamlin, President

Angel Luis Juarbe, Principal, Elliot Street School

Lanny S. Kurzweil, Esq., Partner, McCarter & English

August C. Lozano, President, August C. Lozano, P.E., Inc.

Louis E. Prezeau, President/CEO, City National Bank of NJ

Gloria Ramos, Assistant to the Dean
School of the Health Professions, Hunter College

Jose Luis Rodriguez, President/CEO, Merrit Investigative Services, Inc.

Richard Roper, President, The Roper Group

Kathy Spivey, Chief of Staff, New Community Corporation

Hector Velazquez, Vice President, Community State Bank

Vielka Velazquez, Esq.

Educating & Guiding Young People

- 163 pre-kindergartners participated in a comprehensive education program with the following components: Bilingual, Multicultural, English as a Second Language, Music, Computers, Nutrition, and Family and Social Services.
- Developmental delays and special needs were detected in 8 children and referral for services were made to Head Start, Catholic Community Services, and Clara Maass Hospital.
- 80% of all parents with children enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program (130 families) stayed employed or continued their educational training programs
- 4 staff members attended Essex County College, Kean College, and Rutgers University to continue their careers in Early Childhood Education, 2 teachers completed requirements for the CDA Bilingual Certification.
- More than 300 children between the ages of 6 and 18 participated in afterschool programs, youth counseling, leadership development and family activities.

Assisting Families

- Over 90 families and 183 children were served by the Family Daycare Providers Network.
- Eighty-five families participated with the Parents and Children's club which offers workshops on parenting skills, family counseling and family outings.
- Over 80 survivors of domestic violence received bilingual crisis intervention, counseling and follow-up services.

- More than \$2.6 million (and counting) was paid out for emergency home energy assistance during the cold winter of 2002-2003, over 18,000 applicants countywide were served by La Casa's program, the highest in the state and a record for La Casa.
- La Casa's Weatherization Assistance Program helped 294 households become more energy efficient, an investment of \$400,000 that will save residents thousands of dollars in energy costs.
- Eighty-six families were assessed and given emergency rental assistance through the Housing Assistance Program.
- Over 460 clients visited Project Vaccinate and approximately half of them followed up and received immunizations for their babies.

Empowering Adults

- La Casa's Welfare to Work initiative had one of the highest job placement rates in Essex County.
- More than 410 adults participated in ESL and Civics classes preparing for work, school and the citizenship test. Approximately 70% of the students who went for the interview have passed their citizenship exam and 90% of those individuals have already registered to vote.*
- Over 280 people received immigration assistance from La Casa's new full-time immigration attorney.
- Hundreds of adults participated in basic skills courses including GEQ preparation and workplace literacy.

- The Telecommunications Learning Center was established as a pilot site for the State's new Workplace Literacy Program.
- Recipient of the State of New Jersey's Individual Development Account (IDA) designation for Essex County to support financial literacy and savings through a dollar for dollar match.

Developing the Community

- Convened more than thirty community meetings, merchant association meetings, special events and educational seminars.
- Raised 20% of the equity for the 60,000 square foot shopping plaza on Broad Street.
- Developed twenty-one more units of affordable housing.
- LC HomeBuilders secured over \$2.5 million in new building contracts, ensuring steady employment for 12 construction workers and exceeding the company's growth projections.

Building Organizational Capacity

- Completion of a \$50,000 renovation phase of La Casa's 90-year-old administrative building.
- Prepared the 2002-2005 Strategic Plan, updating the previous year.
- Completed a fund development feasibility study and created a 2003-2004 Fund Development Plan.

presidents' message

"Our efforts today and tomorrow become part of our growing legacy as we continue to demonstrate to our constituents and peers our commitment to serve our community, particularly those with the greatest need."

Dear Friends,

We would like to extend our sincere thanks and congratulations to our staff, to our Executive Director and to our fellow board members for another successful year. As the outgoing president and president elect of La Casa, it is our collective feeling of pride and honor to have served as board members and past and in-coming board presidents. We are thrilled to have embraced our respective charges during La Casa's most successful period of growth and achievement.

We take great pride in the comprehensive range and quality of services La Casa provides as well as the effective manner that La Casa has managed its growth. The proof of our success is expressed in the increased confidence and support from our own community and our funding sources.

In the last five years we have almost doubled the number of individuals and families served to over 22,000 while growing our resources from \$3.5 million to \$10.0 million in our core programs. We particularly value our growing reputation as the place of choice for residents and the community at large. We especially thank our partners in the private, foundation and government sectors for fostering our strategic growth and for their unwavering support during difficult economic times.

As we serve more and more people within the north end of Newark, including the dynamically changing Hispanic communities and other Newark and Essex County residents, we must acknowledge that the needs themselves also grow and become interwoven and more complex. During these challenging economic times, La Casa de Don Pedro must redouble its efforts in order to foster "self-sufficiency, empowerment and neighborhood revitalization" to achieve the sustainable neighborhoods with the quality of life desired by all of us and envisioned by the founding members some thirty years ago.

La Casa's board and staff are committed to addressing the challenges before us with the highest level of quality services while remaining fiscally responsible. Without a doubt, La Casa is destined for greater accomplishments. The entire board shares the enthusiasm for an even brighter future for La Casa and the communities we serve.

As we draw to the close of our 30th year, let us reflect on our grass root origins, our founding members and the many lives that have benefited from our services. Let's continue to fulfill our mission with the legacy that has been built. Our efforts today and tomorrow become part of our growing legacy as we continue to demonstrate to our constituents and peers our commitment to serve our community, particularly those with the greatest need.

We extend our appreciation to the leadership of our organization, our Executive Director, Raymond Ocasio and his senior management team, the entire staff and our fellow members of the Board of Directors for their unwavering dedication to La Casa de Don Pedro and the work that we do.

Sincerely,



Hector Velazquez
President



Zoraya Lee-Hamlin
President-Elect



Dear Friends, Colleagues and Supporters,

As we come to the end of our celebration and commemoration of the last thirty years of La Casa de Don Pedro's existence, I remain as impressed as I was some five years ago when I accepted the Executive Director's position. At that time, La Casa was celebrating its 25th anniversary and as an observer of La Casa, I and others recognized it as a leading community based service organization.

Today I am even more proud and honored by what La Casa stands for and what it represents.

As a grassroots organization, La Casa has re-embraced its roots within the community. We do this by serving our constituency, listening to the community and helping the community deal with the broad issues confronting the residents and neighborhoods. In the last five years, we have tackled specific neighborhood matters as well as larger quality of life issues. La Casa is in the vanguard of city and state community development and educational issues. By strengthening our engagement within this community, we enhanced our legacy and greatest asset: our connection to the community and its residents.

La Casa enhanced our internal capacity to better provide services and support to the community. We have strengthened our financial capacity and control systems. We elevated the compensation and fringe benefits to respectable and even competitive levels while improving the work place environment. We developed an organizational structure that permits and supports a cadre of leaders and professionals who believe in our mission and work well together.

Planning is central to our expanded initiatives. The elevation of our early childhood development and after school programs, the success of our WorkFirst activities, the ever-growing number of recipients of energy assistance, and the consistent housing and economic development pipeline are all rooted in our planning efforts. As an organization we have adopted organizational and community planning as the fundamental guidelines to what, why and where we do the things we do. Our budget process is laced with annual work plans that are drawn from our strategic planning and forward thinking.

All of these elements have come together making La Casa a better organization. In turn this has permitted us to make better use of our resources and to capture new funding from more sources while our closest and long time supporters have upgraded their support. This has generated new opportunities with broader, more comprehensive and integrated services.

Clearly, the legacy that has been achieved over the last thirty years fills us with pride. We charge forward into the future knowing that our work is not finished and that our greatest legacy is dependent on what we do next.

Sincerely,



Raymond Ocasio
Executive Director

"...the legacy that has been achieved over the last thirty years fills us with pride. We charge forward into the future knowing that our work is not finished and that our greatest legacy is dependant on what we do next."

Administrative Team

Raymond Ocasio, Executive Director

Enid Mendez, Executive Assistant

Niladri Bagchi, Chief Financial Officer

Albania Pichardo, Accountant

Alle Ries, Director of Program and Fund Development

Ivy Pittman, Associate Fund Development and Public Relations Officer

early childhood education statistics

In 1973, when the founders created La Casa de Don Pedro Familias Unidas Day Care Center, it became New Jersey's first bilingual, bicultural childcare center. Today, the Early Childhood Development Division incorporates well-researched principles of child development and learning. The Division provides a supportive learning environment that embraces family values, respects heritage and cultural roots, and motivates parents to become the child's most important mentor and educator. The Early Childhood Education Division's primary goals are focused on providing high quality early childhood education and related services to three and four year old children who live in Newark. The Division establishes positive relationships with families, providing support services and social services whenever appropriate.

In 1999/2000 the childcare program transitioned into early childhood education, by upgrading our teacher's certifications and instituting an age-appropriate educational curriculum in a bilingual, bicultural environment.

A third Early Childhood Development facility will open in early 2004, increasing La Casa's enrollment capacity from 145 to 240.

The Newark Board of Education mandates that every 3 and 4-year old entering a pre-kindergarten program must be assessed at the beginning and the end of the year. Children are evaluated in the areas of developmental competency and literacy. The Brigance Assessment tests the developmental abilities of the child in the realm of cognitive, social, communication and other competencies. The average child enrolled in La Casa's Early Childhood Development Program tests below the 70% mark at the beginning of the school year. The post-test results demonstrate enormous progress as the average child reaches the 80-90% mark. The same is true for the literacy assessment-by the end of the school year, the average La Casa child is found to read at the highest level for their age group.

Many of La Casa's children come from Spanish-speaking or bilingual households. The Early Childhood Development Program strives to ensure that every child who graduates feels confident speaking both English and Spanish. The program places its language emphasis on excelling in both languages and in celebrating all aspects of the individual's heritage and community.

CHILDREN'S COMPOSITION

Total Number of Children Served 1972-2000	3,050
2002 Enrollment	145
Percentage of Low Income Participants (2002)	97%
Ethnic Composition (2002)	97% Hispanic 3% African American

DIVISION STAFF

Staff Size	37
Average length of employment at La Casa	10 Years
Number of past La Casa program participants	5
Some College	24
Attained a BA	6
Attained an advanced degree	3
CDA Certified (all bi-lingual)	15
Employees living in the area (within 10 miles)	30



"I have been a volunteer from the National Council of Aging at La Casa de Don Pedro for 2 years. I really love reading to the children and working on art projects with them."

*- Celina Cano
Volunteer Assistant Teacher*

Martha Villegas, *Division Director* / Gloria Jerez, *Deputy Director*
Wanda Recio, *Early Childhood Center Manager* / Xiomara Guevara, *Early Childhood Center Manager*

planting the seed



"The most important part of my job is not the new heating systems or the insulation that we install, it is the gratitude and sense of pride I have knowing that the families will be warm through the winter months."

*- Oscar Otaola
Senior Estimator and Work Supervisor,
Weatherization program for 17 years*

La Casa introduced the Weatherization program in 1986 to address the physical issues faced by communities with an aging housing stock and lower incomes. This program became a vehicle to assist home owners and tenants address energy-related issues such as boiler repairs and replacement, window upgrades and building insulation.

The Weatherization Assistance staff assesses a home's overall energy efficiency and implements improvements to the building shell while ensuring that health and safety standards are met. The Home Energy Assistance Program assists low-income families in meeting the cost of high-energy bills, preventing termination of energy service and providing emergency fuel assistance.

Since the Community Improvement Division was reorganized in 1998 to increase energy efficiency and reduce the burden of high home-energy costs to low and moderate-income residents in Essex County, it has been a consistent leader based on the number of units served and dollar value of the total improvements.

In 2000, the Division on Aging awarded La Casa a contract to provide senior citizens with emergency repairs or replacements for their heating systems. In the summer of 2003, the program will deliver air conditioning units to qualified Essex County residents.

Each year La Casa's Home Energy Assistance Program sees a volume of clients rivaled only by Camden County's program. To meet this enormous demand for services and to satisfy the rigorous verification process established by the State, the Community Improvement Division created an innovative database program. This database tracks every program participant using a variety of factors and keeps an up-to-the-moment record of how much assistance has already been given to the individual as well as to all program recipients. The system impressed La Casa's monitors from the State so much that La Casa's database system is now a model for other Home Energy Assistance programs throughout New Jersey.

community improvement

YEAR	NUMBER OF APPLICANTS*	EMERGENCY FUNDS GRANTED*
1996-97	7,000	\$900,000
1997-98	9,000	\$900,000
1998-99	10,000	\$900,000
1999-2000	12,000	\$1.2 Million
2000-01	14,000	\$1.2 Million
2001-02	12,000	\$1.2 Million
2002-03	18,000 and counting	\$2.6 Million and counting

*Data is approximated

Norma Sessa, *Division Director* / John Becker, *Deputy Director*

nuturing our resources

The Hispanic Women's Resource Center (HWRC) and The Personal Development Division (PDD) administers multi-service educational and occupational training programs designed to prepare our adult population for the workplace.

The Division's philosophy is that personal economic improvement and development is strongly linked to self-sufficiency and, ultimately, the overall stability and growth of the community. By offering individuals the opportunity to acquire the necessary educational, occupational readiness, and vocational training needed to obtain and sustain adequate employment. Many of our clients are able to go beyond dreaming about a better life to actually seeing the upward mobility of their efforts.

In 1990 the State of New Jersey created a statewide network of urban women's centers. La Casa was selected to host the Hispanic Women's Resource Center of Northern New Jersey.

The Hispanic Women's Resource Center started out by offering ESL and specialized training programs to women. Some of the women involved with the HWRC are welfare recipients and require additional in-depth vocational services. Others, particularly the most recent immigrants come with varied educational experiences, some with advanced degrees and others with the

absence of literacy even in their native language. Today students can take ESL classes, deal with cultural issues and prepare for the workplace and receive assistance finding a job with immigration issues all in one location.

With support from the Departments of Labor and Education, La Casa expanded its Telecommunications Learning Center (TLC), a state of the art computer center. The TLC allows our participants to embark on an individualized skills development curriculum. Our new workplace literacy component further encourages the individual's goals by enabling participants to explore careers, learn about necessary skill sets and undertake the necessary prerequisite training to familiarize participants in a chosen field.

The Personal Development Division also conducts 4-week trainings to assist work-ready participants find employment. Participants work with a Job Developer who matches them with appropriate job openings. La Casa has one of the highest placement rates in the country.

CITIZENSHIP

Many of our participants are recent immigrants to the United States and face citizenship issues. A full-time attorney provides affordable immigration services. ESL training is one part of achieving citizenship; our ESL-Civics program helps individuals prepare for the citizenship exam, covering all of the requisite topic areas while giving the students important test-taking and stress management tips.



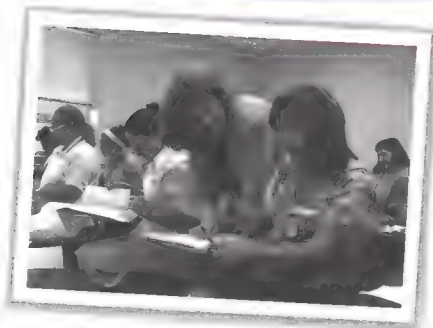
"It's very important to find a good balance between teaching computer basics and human interaction. These classes make a real difference in our students lives."

*-Gerald Gonzalez
TLC Instructor since 2002*

Thank you! Your support
helped us reach 100,000
!Gracias! Su apoyo nos ayudó a

La Casa de Don Pedro

75 Park Avenue
Newark, N.J. 07104



"I came to the United States from the Dominican Republic 16 years ago. A friend who took ESL classes at La Casa told me what a great opportunity this would be for me. I want to study English and teach children."

- Josefina Leon

personal development

IMMIGRATION, ESL AND CIVICS

Total Students Served July 1, 2002- June 16, 2003: 410 (the goal was 395)

70% of the students who went for their interview have passed the citizenship exam.

The majority of students, who have passed the citizenship exam, receive assistance in completing their immigration paperwork through our immigration program.

In 2002, the immigration attorney saw over 280 clients.

Wendy Melendez, Division Director / Carlos Mercado, Deputy Director

preparing the foundation

Community advocacy and organizing are fundamental tenets of La Casa's mission to foster self-sufficiency and empowerment in the community. In the early days, the agency's strength came from uniting underrepresented residents so they might be heard. Today, a team of Community Organizers handles community outreach and community-building duties within the Community & Economic Development Division. The organizing team works with residents around a variety of issues from sanitation to drugs, education to youth activities, quality of life issues to "getting out the vote."

In the 1980s, as disinvestments and blight in Newark continued to spread, wiping out safe and affordable housing, responding to this need La Casa expanded its activities to directly impact on quality, affordable shelter. In 1988 La Casa completed its first housing development, renovating a seven-unit affordable housing venture, followed by a 49-unit townhouse condominium. While these early efforts were a response to the critical need for housing, they did not fully integrate housing and community development into the agency's mission. In 1997 La Casa initiated a community planning agenda in collaboration with other community partners. The planning work enabled La Casa to expand the scope of its development agenda into community and economic development. By integrating housing, commercial revitalization and economic development strategies with other agency programs, La Casa evolved into a

comprehensive community based development organization.

Since 1997, La Casa has produced three successful residential developments and several rehabilitations within the targeted Lower Broadway community, with a fourth project recently approved and a fifth in the predevelopment stage. Our commercial revitalization efforts took off when we developed a \$2.8 million community facility on Broadway, the area's main commercial corridor. The facility is the first step in a major commercial revitalization effort. La Casa is currently developing a shopping center with a 40,000 square foot supermarket and has stepped-up our development efforts.

In 1999, LC HomeBuilders was created as a for-profit affiliate to provide low-income residents with steady employment while executing and supporting La Casa's physical development agenda. LC HomeBuilders has renovated affordable housing (over \$400K of development work) and built our facility at 39 Broadway. They have also successfully bid on three major projects with other non-profit organizations including a community facility, an early childhood development center and affordable housing valued at over \$2.5 million and are slated to develop a \$2 million childcare facility for La Casa. The company maintains a staff of 14 full-time employees who receive benefits and will hold equity in the company.

As part of the legacy of dealing with community needs and self-sufficiency, in 1984 La

Casa sponsored the creation of La Casa's Federal Credit Union. This institution provided local residents with basic banking and financial services at a time when mainstream financial institutions were fleeing the city. Today, the Credit Union serves over 600 member customers with savings accounts and loans for their personal, auto and housing needs. Recently, La Casa and the credit union launched the Individual Development Account (IDA) program, which provides savings incentives to low-income individuals for housing, education and business ventures.



La Casa's planning and development process in Newark's north end has provided great insight and support to several citywide planning efforts. La Casa made a significant contribution to the Master Plan's basic land use and zoning elements while helping define the city's "Engines of Growth" using its Lower Broadway Commercial Corridor Plan. Furthermore, our planning process enabled La Casa to provide critical input to the Newark Public Schools' Facility Plan, particularly the Franklin Jones McKinley school zones. The integrity of the school system's facilities planning process was further supported by our advocacy and mobilization of residents all over the city. Our participation in the "Land for Learning" coalitions helped to preserve school sites and is fostering real community input in the development of community schools.

We are also launching an Open Space Initiative in response to our community's constant call for easily accessible and safe play areas.

In 2002, Project Vaccinate was launched to locate, educate and provide free immunizations to Newark's children.

2002 AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

GOVERNOR JAMES E. MCGREEVEY

GOVERNOR JAMES E. MCGREEVEY

was a Gold Award recipient for the
in the HUD's Secretary's Award for Excellence

HISPANIC BUSINESS MAGAZINE RANKED LA CASA #10

Julio Colon, Division Director / Dan McGuire, Deputy Director

strengthening each and every branch

UPCOMING PROJECTS

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	FINANCING	STATUS
First Street Early Childhood Center	Rehabilitation and addition of a new addition for 13,000 square foot Early Childhood Education Center serving 120 children in eight classrooms	\$2.2 Million: First Union, NJ Community Loan Fund, LISC and Prudential	Completion: Early 2004
Lower Broadway Stabilization Project	13 units of housing for low- and moderate-income and market-rate homebuyers	\$2 Million total: NJHMF (MON) and private lenders	Start Construction: Early 2004
Broad Street Plaza Shopping Center	Development of a 40,000 sq. ft. supermarket and 20,000 sq. ft. of retail space. A joint partnership between La Casa and a private for-profit	\$10 Million: Federal Office of Community Services grant, Victoria Foundation, LISC (quasi-governmental), and private/social investment	Start Construction: Early 2004
MLK Homes	New development of 50 units of high-impact developments. A joint partnership between La Casa, LISC and the City to use condemnation powers to create high-impact developments. Approx. 50 units.	\$10 Million: NJHMF, City of Newark HOME funds, LISC	Start Construction: Early 2004
Broadway Gateway	Development of a 100,000 sq. ft. commercial space in a signature building located at the entrance of the Lower Broadway Commercial Corridor	\$5 Million: Quasi-government financing	To Be Determined
La Casa de Arte y Cultura	Construction of a 10,000 sq. ft. artist studio space, rehearsal room, and performance space	\$1.5 Million: Grants and financing	To Be Determined
Commercial District Parking Lot	Construction of a 100-space parking lot on Lower Broadway	\$1.5 Million: Grants and financing	To Be Determined

"As a first time home buyer, I am indebted to the guidance and assistance from La Casa. I chose to purchase a home in north Newark because I want to continue to live in the community."

- John Santiago, La Casa Homeowner



strengthening each and every branch

The Youth and Family Services Division houses one of La Casa's flagship programs: after school services. La Casa has offered after school and recreational programs to youth for over 20 years, developing new initiatives as needs arise. The Division's primary goal is to provide stability to families and children through child care services, youth and family crisis intervention and family support. This goal also includes providing advocacy to families in crisis around homelessness and domestic violence issues.

La Casa's youth-oriented programs address youth between the ages of 5 and 18. Each program offers academic and cultural enrichment in a setting that is supportive to individual and group development. Our elementary and middle school children engage in homework assistance, art classes, computer exercises, community awareness, recreational activities and participate in a variety of field trips to local cultural institutions. Once a youngster reaches high school, La Casa offers programs that nurture positive behavior such as leadership development, career exploration, community service, employment skills and emotional management. If a young person is in trouble, La Casa's youth counseling program and staff are there to help the teenager find the right path.

Nurturing parenting skills and dealing with crises in the home also falls within the realm of the Youth and Family Services Division. The Family And Child Education Services (FACES), program at La Casa is a three-pronged initiative that trains, certifies and supports individuals who wish to start a childcare program in their home, teaches parenting skills to parents of young children and offers health education and access to health services. Abused spouses or domestic partners can receive counseling, guidance to improve their living situations or seek out shelter and support to escape abusive and violent environments. The division also focuses on preventing homelessness and utility disconnections with financial assistance, housing workshops and individual counseling and advocacy.

The family's well-being is further bolstered by the Division's numerous celebrations: talent shows, family outings and in-house activities. From creating arts exhibits for the Newark Museum to attending a show at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, our participants are given many unique opportunities to spend quality time together as a family unit. These activities help build stronger families with shared experiences, while contributing to the overall health of the community.

youth and family services statistics profile

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF LOW INCOME
Youth Ages 5-12	220	75%
Youth Ages 13-18	105	66%
Adults in the Domestic Violence Program	Over 80	98%
Adults in the Housing Program	90	60%
Number of young people employed through Youth and Family in the last year	60	N/A
Annual increase in level of service since 1998	Not Applicable	10%



"My daughter, Shayla, has been in the program for four years. The environment is a positive one where she interacts with children her own age. Since she has been in the program she has become an honor roll student."

-Delia Andaluz, Shayla's mother

Edward Hernandez, Division Director / Monica Almagro, Deputy Director

cultivating the soil

1970's

- 1971** - 10 family members came together to explore self-sufficiency and empowerment under the organizational name of La Casa de Don Pedro, the organization is formally incorporated in 1972.
- 1973** - Familia Unidas, the state's first bi-lingual bicultural Day Care Center opens as a program of La Casa de Don Pedro.
- 1974** - La Casa receives its first major private grant from the Victoria Foundation to support youth services.



1980's

- 1981** - La Casa receives its first federal grant to provide services for delinquent youth. 75 Park Avenue site is purchased for the daycare program. The following year, 23 Broadway is purchased for Social Services for youth programs and the Lower Broadway Community Development Project.
- 1985** - La Casa's budget exceeds \$1 million dollars and, with a staff of 60 people, the organization serves over 3,000 residents. La Casa's Federal Credit Union is established as the only institution able to provide loans, savings plans, financial planning education to North Ward residents. Over 175 people joined in the first year.
- 1986** - Mt. Prospect Gardens, La Casa's first affordable housing project is completed.



1990's

1990 - The Hispanic Women's Resource Center is one of three centers established statewide with a \$100,000 grant from the State of New Jersey.

1990 - La Casa's annual budget reaches \$3.6 million

1991 - Don Pedro Housing Corporation is created to take on the physical revitalization of Newark's north end.

1994 - La Casa serves over 5,600 people annually

1995 - Ramon Rivera, La Casa's first Executive Director retires after 23 years of leadership.

1997 - La Casa celebrates 25 years of service with legendary entertainers, Celia Cruz and Tito Puente. It was the first community organization to host and sell out an event at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC)

1999 - Alfonso Roman, a La Casa co-founder retires from the Board of Directors after 26 years of service and is named President Emeritus of the Board. La Casa's budget reaches \$5.317 with 12,000 people served annually.

2000's

2000 - \$5 Million budget achieved and LC Homebuilders, a for-profit construction affiliate company employing 10 residents is launched to support revitalization.

2001 - Completion of 39 Broadway ,a \$2.8 million community facility at 39 Broadway, housing a variety of program activities and serves as the initial revitalization effort to the Lower Broadway Commercial District.

2002 - Founders, Funders & Family celebration honoring Elba Andino, Alfonso Roman, Hilda Hidalgo, Miguel Rodriguez and Amikar Vilkar-Lopez, Victoria, Prudential and Schumann Foundations held at the Newark Museum. Over the course of the year, more than 20,000 residents are served.

2003 - \$10 million in program funding is achieved and Hispanic Business Magazine ranks La Casa #10 among 25 top Hispanic Non-Profit organizations in the U.S.



La Casa de Don Pedro

75 Park Avenue, Newark, New Jersey 07104

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